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DATE 20 AUG 1986

SOVA ROUTING SLIP

	Action	Info	Initial
D/SOVA		✓	
DD/SOVA		✓	
EO		✓	
ES/AB			
ES/PBB			
SIG		✓	
SIG/SED			
SIG/SPD		✓	
NIG			
NIG/EPD			
NIG/DPD			
RIG		✓	
RIG/EAD		✓	
RIG/TWAD			
DEIG			
DEIG/DID			
DEIG/DED			
SUSPENSE DATE			

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EXECUTIVE SECRETARIAT
ROUTING SLIP

TO:		ACTION	INFO	DATE	INITIAL
1	DCI		X		
2	DDCI		X		
3	EXDIR				
4	D/ICS				
5	DI		X		
6	DDA				
7	DDO				
8	DDS&T				
9	Chm/NIC				
10	GC				
11	IG				
12	Compt				
13	D/OLL				
14	D/PAO				
15	D/PERS				
16	VC/NIC				
17	C/ACIS		X		
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	SUSPENSE		Date		

Remarks: C/ACIS to maintain record copy, sharing as appropriate but keeping signature record of those who see.

25X1

Executive Secretary
18 Aug 86
Date

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

SYSTEM II
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August 16, 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE DIRECTOR, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY

SUBJECT: NSDD-233 on Consultations Concerning a Presidential Response to General Secretary Gorbachev (S)

The President has approved the attached National Security Decision Directive specifying the terms of consultation on a Presidential response to General Secretary Gorbachev's letter of June 19, 1986. (S)

Due to the sensitivity of this subject, this NSDD should not be reproduced and access to it should be restricted to agency principals only. A separate NSDD will be issued giving guidance for the development of detailed instructions for preparing for the next round of Nuclear and Space Talks. (C)

FOR THE PRESIDENT:

John M. Poindexter

Attachment:
NSDD-233 (S)

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

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July 31, 1986

NATIONAL SECURITY DECISION DIRECTIVE NUMBER 233

CONSULTATIONS ON A RESPONSE TO GENERAL SECRETARY GORBACHEV (S)

After extensive discussions with the members of the National Security Planning Group and other senior advisors, I have tentatively decided on the substance of the response that I would like to provide to General Secretary Gorbachev's letter of June 19, 1986. Pending consultations and further review, my intention is to send the General Secretary a private letter which would include the following text addressing the area of U.S.-Soviet arms control. (C)

Text of Arms Control Portion of the Letter (C)

I have taken careful note of the proposals your negotiators made during the recent round in Geneva. I have also continued to ponder our discussion in Geneva last November and our subsequent correspondence, including your June 19th letter. As you may have guessed from our earlier exchanges, I heartily agree with the statement you made in your address to the last plenary session of the CPSU Central Committee about the need to "search for new approaches to make it possible to clear the road to a reduction of nuclear arms." That is certainly the most urgent task before us. (C)

In Geneva, you expressed to me the concern that one side might acquire the capability to deliver a disarming first strike against the other by adding advanced strategic defenses to a large arsenal of offensive nuclear weapons. The United States does not possess the numbers of weapons needed to carry out an effective first strike; nor do we have any intention of acquiring such a capability. Quite the contrary, you well know my strong view that we both should immediately and significantly reduce the size of our nuclear arsenals. Nevertheless, since this remains a particular concern from your point of view, I agree that the "new approach" you have called for should address this concern directly. Neither side should have a first strike capability. (C)

The issue of advanced systems of strategic defense is one on which we have both focused in connection with a "new approach." Research and exploration on the feasibility of such advanced strategic defenses is a subject we have discussed with each other. I want to address it now, at the very outset of this letter, because I am aware that the issue is a matter of great

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concern to both of us. We both agree that neither side should deploy systems of strategic defense simply to augment and enhance its offensive capability. I have assured you that the United States has no interest in seeking unilateral advantage in this area. To ensure that neither of us is in a position to do so, we would be prepared immediately to conclude an agreement incorporating the following limits:

(a) While it may take longer to complete such research, both sides would confine themselves for five years, through 1991, to a program of research, development, and associated testing, which is permitted by the ABM Treaty, to determine whether, in principle, advanced reliable systems of strategic defense are technically feasible. Such research could include testing necessary to establish feasibility. In the event either side wishes to conduct such testing, the other side shall have the right to observe the tests, in accord with mutually agreed procedures.

(b) Following this period of research or at some later future time, either the United States or the Soviet Union may determine that advanced systems of strategic defense are technically feasible. Either party may then desire to proceed beyond research, development, and associated testing to deployment of an advanced strategic defense system. In anticipation that this may occur, we would be prepared to sign a treaty now which would require the party that decides to proceed to deploy an advanced strategic defense system to share the benefits of such a system with the other providing there is mutual agreement to eliminate the offensive ballistic missiles of both sides. Once a plan is offered to this end, the details of the sharing arrangement and the elimination of offensive ballistic missiles would be the subject of negotiations for a period of no more than two years.

(c) If, following the period of research and subsequent to two years after either side has offered a plan for such sharing and the associated mutual elimination of ballistic missiles, the United States and Soviet Union have not agreed on such a plan, either side will be free to deploy unilaterally after six months' notice of such intention is given to the other side. (S)

You also continue to express concern that research on advanced defensive systems could lead to the deployment of spaceborne systems designed to inflict mass destruction on earth. This is certainly not our intention, and I do not agree that such an outcome is a necessary result of such research. We already are both party to agreements in place that address this area. And, quite the contrary to your concern, U.S. research into advanced defenses is focused on finding ways to directly defend against existing systems that transit through space and are specifically designed to produce such damage. However, in the context of the approach outlined above, I would also be prepared to have our

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representatives discuss additional assurances that would further ban deployment in space of advanced weapons designed to inflict mass destruction on the surface of the earth. (S)

I would expect that you would agree that significant commitments of this type with respect to strategic defenses would make sense only if made in conjunction with the implementation of immediate actions on both our sides to begin moving toward our commonly shared goal of the total elimination of nuclear weapons. Toward this goal, I believe we also share the view that the process must begin with radical and stabilizing reductions in the offensive nuclear arsenals of both the United States and the Soviet Union. (S)

In the area of strategic offensive nuclear forces, we remain concerned about what we perceive as a first-strike capability against at least a portion of our retaliatory forces. This is a condition that I cannot ignore. I continue to hope that our efforts in pursuit of significant reductions in existing nuclear arsenals will help resolve this problem. I remain firmly committed to our agreement to seek the immediate implementation of the principle of a fifty percent reduction, on an equitable and verifiable basis, of existing strategic arsenals of the United States and the Soviet Union. The central provision should be reduction of strategic ballistic missile warheads. However, if needed, I am prepared to consider initial reductions of a less sweeping nature as an interim measure. In this context, along with specific limits on ballistic missile warheads, we are prepared to limit long-range air-launched cruise missiles to below our current plan, and to limit the total number of ICBMs, SLBMs and heavy bombers to a level in the range suggested by the Soviet side. These reductions should begin as soon as possible and be completed within an agreed period of time. (S)

At the same time, we could deal with the question of intermediate-range nuclear missiles by agreeing on the goal of eliminating this entire class of land-based, LRINF missiles world-wide, which is consistent with the total elimination of all nuclear weapons, and by agreeing on immediate steps that would lead toward this goal in either one step, or, if you prefer, in a series of steps. Your comments regarding intermediate range nuclear missile systems suggest to me that we were heading in the right direction last November when we endorsed the idea of an interim INF agreement. While an immediate agreement leading to the elimination of long range INF missile systems in Europe and in the rest of the world as well would be the best outcome, a partial, interim approach may prove the most promising way to achieve early reductions if we are unable to move now to the complete elimination of these missiles. (S)

Both sides have now put forward proposals whose ultimate result would be equality at zero for our two countries in long range INF missile warheads. If we can also agree that such equality is

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possible at a level above zero, we would take a major step towards the achievement of an INF agreement. (S)

We should seek such an interim agreement without delay. I would be interested in any specific suggestions that you may wish to offer towards this end. It is important that reductions begin immediately and that significant progress be achieved within an agreed period of time. (S)

Of course, I would hope that we could also agree now that once we have achieved a fifty percent reduction in the U.S. and Soviet offensive nuclear arsenals and the progress we seek in eliminating intermediate-range nuclear missiles, we would continue to pursue negotiations for further reductions in strategic offensive nuclear arsenals, with other nuclear powers participating. Such negotiations could focus on the reduction of the size of nuclear arsenals then held by the negotiating powers. The overall aim should be the elimination of all nuclear weapons. (S)

I will be instructing our negotiators to present these proposals, along with appropriate implementing details, when the next round of negotiations begins in Geneva in September. I hope that your negotiators will be prepared to respond in a positive and constructive fashion so that we can proceed promptly to agreement. (S)

Mr. General Secretary, I hope that you will notice that I have tried explicitly to take into account the concerns you expressed to me in Geneva and in our correspondence, as well as key elements of your most recent proposals. I believe you will see that this approach provides assurance that neither country would be able to exploit research on strategic defense to acquire a disarming first-strike capability, or to deploy weapons of mass destruction in space. The framework I propose should permit us to proceed immediately to reduce existing nuclear arsenals as we have agreed is desirable, and to establish the conditions for proceeding to further reductions toward the goal of total elimination. (S)

With respect to nuclear testing, as you know, we believe a safe, reliable and effective nuclear deterrent requires testing. Thus, while a ban on such testing remains a long-term U.S. objective, I cannot see how we could move immediately to a complete ban on such testing under present circumstances. We are, however, hopeful that with the initiation of discussions between our respective experts, we can make progress toward eliminating the verification uncertainties which currently preclude ratification of the treaties signed in 1974 and 1976. Upon ratification of these treaties, and in association with a program to reduce and eliminate nuclear weapons, we would be prepared to discuss ways to implement a parallel program to achieve progress in effectively limiting and ultimately eliminating nuclear testing

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in a step-by-step fashion. The immediate next step needed is our agreement on verification procedures which would permit ratification of the 1974 and 1976 treaties. I would hope that the exchanges between our experts will permit us to take this step promptly. (S)

With regard to conventional and chemical forces, I fully agree that the existing fora and channels should be used more actively. As you know, it is our view that, among other things, the correction of conventional and other force imbalances is a vital requirement for our achieving the complete elimination of nuclear weapons. The conventional and chemical force areas differ in several ways from nuclear matters. As you have pointed out, a major difference is the number of relevant states -- much larger in both conventional and, potentially, in chemical armaments than the nuclear area. I could, however, envision fruitful confidential exchanges between our negotiators and experts, away from the glare of publicity. I would suggest that such discussions could first profit by preliminary exchanges to clarify and focus the agenda of such meetings. When we have been able to make some preliminary progress on this point, we may wish to consider having our respective ambassadors to MBFR, CDE, and the CD get together in capitals for bilateral exchanges. (S)

Consultation Process (C)

Necessary consultations with Congress and Allied governments should be conducted on the basis of the above text. These consultations should be completed and the results reported for my consideration not later than July 23, 1986. (C)

Nuclear Testing (C)

In the area of nuclear testing, our immediate objective remains prompt agreement on verification procedures to permit moving forward on ratification of the Threshold Test Ban Treaty and Peaceful Nuclear Explosives Treaty. As noted above, however, I believe that following ratification of these treaties, we should be prepared to consider further limitations on nuclear testing in parallel with actual reductions in strategic nuclear arms. (S)

In order to be prepared for such consideration, I request the Department of Energy, assisted by the Department of Defense and other agencies as appropriate, to conduct a technical review, based on the work recently completed by the Arms Control Support Group (ACSG), of how a scheme involving a decreasing numerical quota of nuclear tests could be implemented while preserving flexibility to conduct essential U.S. testing and while providing for an acceptable level of verification. At the same time, I request the Department of Defense, assisted by the Department of State, the Joint Chiefs of Staff and the Arms Control and

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Disarmament Agency, to resolve the policy issues associated with this scheme, as identified in the ACSG work, and to assess its potential impact upon the ability of the United States to meet is national security requirements. Both studies should be conducted on a close-hold basis and completed by August 15, 1986. (S)

Ronald Reagan

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